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SUBJECT: BRAZIL: SUPPORTS GOALS BUT NOT MEANS IN U.S.-CANADA-MEXICO PROPOSAL TO MONTREAL PROTOCOL

REF: STATE 95899

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. The Government of Brazil (GOB) understands and is concerned by the growing use of HFCs to replace HCFCs. Nonetheless, it is opposed to both the U.S.-Mexico-Canada and the Mauritius and Micronesia proposals to the Montreal Protocol to address this problem. The GOB sees such proposals as undermining the Kyoto Protocol, which covers HFCs already. END SUMMARY

¶2. (SBU) Per REFTEL, Science Counselor met on September 24 with Bianca Abreu, the officer handling the Montreal Protocol within the Ministry of External Relations' (MRE) Division of Sustainable Development Policy, to discuss the U.S.-Canada-Mexico proposal to the Montreal Protocol. That proposal would phase down the consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), greenhouse gases currently controlled under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Kyoto Protocol, and that are substitutes to ozone depleting chemicals being eliminated under the Montreal Protocol. Abreu already had received a copy of the proposal and had analyzed it carefully.

¶3. (SBU) Abreu said that Government of Brazil (GOB) agrees with the goal of this proposal to take action to prevent the growth in the use of HFC, which are the fact that HFCs are the predominant low-cost substitutes for hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) being phased out under the Montreal Protocol. While she thought that this proposal was more effective than the proposal of Mauritius and the Federated States of Micronesia to address the same problem, she stated that the GOB could not support either one.

¶4. (SBU) The issue for the GOB is that HFC's are included under the Kyoto Protocol. The GOB sees these two proposal as "weakening" the Kyoto Protocol. Abreu recognized the attempt in Article III of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada proposal to address the possible conflict between the Montreal Protocol and the Kyoto Protocol. She said that was not satisfactory. The GOB was opposed to any amendment to the Montreal Protocol dealing with a chemical covered by the Kyoto Protocol. Abreu said that the MRE still needed to coordinate with the other interested ministries and agencies, but she did not expect there to be a change in position on this critical point.

¶5. (SBU) The GOB does recognize that the growing use of HFCs is a problem. One way to deal with the problem that they could support would be to create incentives and financing to help countries that are eliminating HCFCs to move to some chemical other than HFCs, one that was not a greenhouse gas or a threat to the ozone layer. This could be done with a modification to the regulations governing the Montreal Protocol's financing mechanisms.

¶6. (SBU) COMMENT. It is good to see that the GOB views with concern the growing use of HFCs and thinks the U.S.-Canada-Mexico

proposal is better than that of Mauritius and Micronesia. The fundamental challenge for getting Brazil on board will be finding an approach that doesn't raises alarms for them about undermining the Kyoto Protocol. The use of positive, financial incentives to avoid switching to HFCs could be a starting place for a conversation on this issue. END COMMENT.

KUBISKE